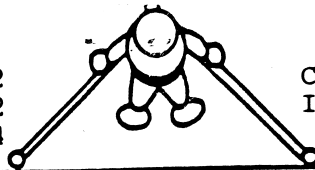


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MATWATCH

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STEVE'S SIDELIGHTS By Steve Beverly

MEMPHIS: THE FINAL DAYS???

Only a few short months ago, with the travail of the WEF/NWA war and the decline of U.S. independent promotions, one could take heart with the assurance, "Thank heavens there's still a Memphis."

This was still the promotion about which one could write a textbook concerning the intimacy of using TV to maintain small territorial interest. This was the place where, no matter how predictable the format, one was consistently attracted by the innovation of the CWA's TV angles. And, of course, there was Lance Russell.

You may have noted last week we offered the only BOMB rating I ever recall placing on a Memphis syndicated broadcast. A RESTHOLD was once tantamount to a disastrous CWA show.

MATWATCH has talked to a number of veteran Memphis watchers in recent weeks. For the first time, serious pessimism is developing over whether Jerry Jarrett's cornerstone promotion can even last into 1990. If Verne Gagne can survive his repeated death watches, that's probably too dramatic an analysis for Memphis.

Always, Jarrett could reach into his promotional bag and pull out a miracle formula when the megapromotions would begin their vulture-like circling. In 1987, it was the Tommy Rich-Austin Idol shaving of Jerry Lawler. Last year, it was the return of Eddie Gilbert and the First Family, then Lawler's celebrated AWA title victory over Curt Hennig (which may have drawn the last full house we'll see for wrestling in the Mid-South Coliseum).

In 1989, the magic doesn't seem to be coming from the top hat. We asked a number of Memphis viewers why and here's a sampling of their perspective:

*****LACK OF QUALITY HEELS.** Almost unanimously, fans have rejected the Robert Fuller-led Stud Stable as too overbearing and after a year, the act is past wearing thin. As one reader puts it, "It hit the low point two weeks ago when we had four Stud Stable interviews and Fuller dominated all of them as he always does." Basically the same routine which nearly killed Continental in 1988.

*****NEED FOR LAWLER TO TURN HEEL.** It seems as though I heard this argument, accurately so, for two years with Dusty Rhodes before his NWA departure. Lawler's continuing act.

as the star babyface hit is final peak when he won the AWA belt and he is consistently booed in the arenas. But most observers don't see it happening in Memphis because of Lawler's business and reported political interests.

*****ADVANCING YOUTH TOO QUICKLY.** To a degree, the CWA has no choice and a key observer believes the youngsters, such as Brian Lee, Master of Pain, John Paul, Tracy Smothers is at least a step to building a future. But when the M.O.P. is handed the "unified" world title which had built some degree of credibility by Lawler's multipromotional defenses, that value of that belt is about as memorable as the old Mid-America title. In a sense, the youth issue is similar to major league baseball teams being forced to advance their young pitchers to the big club before they're genuinely ready.

*****JARRETT'S AWAY TOO MUCH.** A simple fact of life. Jarrett has spent so much time in Dallas attempting to salvage what's remaining of World Class (which, because of its TV network, is more lucrative), his personal attention has been away from the CWA. To a degree, observers say it is one reason for the recent departure of Randy Hales, who two sources told us had become Jarrett's alleged scapegoat for the Memphis problems.

*****LOSS OF LANCE RUSSELL.** The May ratings sweeps in Memphis will tell the tale with this. While Dave Brown is much respected in this market, he isn't the interactive and colorful announcer as was Russell and early perceptions are the jump to the NWA by Lance has hurt more than was anticipated.

Personally, I'm pessimistic that an expected return of Austin Idol and Lawler as a team will turn things around because there aren't enough power heels here to make more than the hardcore's care. Tony Anthony certainly isn't going to become a major money draw, unless I'm quite fooled.

The addition of Ronald V. Gossett IV as a comic heel has been accepted fairly well but he's reverted between color commentator and straight manager in recent weeks and the changes disrupt viewers' attention.

I am of the belief that with today's economics, and the sophistication of the modern TV viewer, Jarrett cannot continue to maintain charades of having Lawler lose his belt in one town and defend it in another

(even if the CWA is only seen in 13 cities, towns like Atlanta and Paducah KY carry both it and MCM in Saturday night blocks). The maintaining of separate promotions under one roof sounds like a joyous idea for feud and talent exchange purposes. But it is unrealistic for cost purposes.

The Key, in my view, is with the Memphis TV ratings. If the May audience levels are sharply down, as bad as I hate to say it, the CWA could be on its way to a tombstone. And I hate that prospect because I still am quite fond of The Little Promotion That Could.

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

MIDNIGHTS CASE IN BECKLEY MAY BE SETTLED BEFORE TRIAL DATE

BECKLEY, W. Va. - A civil suit against Stan Lane, Bobby Eaton, Jim Cornette, Jim Crockett Promotions and a Beckley security agency may be settled before a May 8 trial date.

The Midnights, Cornette and the other parties are being sued by 63-year-old Roy Massey and his wife. Massey contends Eaton and Lane beat him after a Beckley match two years ago. The Midnights have filed assault countercharges against Massey.

Court documents show Massey claims he was erroneously accused of hurling a wooden circle marker at Eaton, who suffered lacerations from the blow. But MATWATCH has learned depositions from other fans have pinpointed Massey as the instigator.

Massey seeks \$6.15 million in damages but MATWATCH has been told he has been offered a cash settlement.

NWA TO BARRY: SIGN THE PAPER AND WE'LL TALK SOME MORE

ATLANTA - Former NWA star Barry Windham and his ex-bosses have continued discussions concerning his possible return.

Windham was asked to sign a release to allow his doctor to discuss the wrestler's medical case with NWA officials. NWA senior v.p. Jim Herd told MATWATCH, "We want to know for sure if he's had surgery on his (injured) hand---and if not, what it will take to clear up his problem and get him well." As of Friday morning, Windham had not signed the release.

Windham was fired by the NWA two weeks ago for several internal personnel problems (see last week's MATWATCH).

FANTASTICS TO JOIN CMF; VON ERICH TO WORK MORE DATES; M EX IN MAY 19

MONTGOMERY, AL - The Fantastics, former NWA U.S. tag team champions, will start with the Continental Wrestling Federation in May.

Tommy Rogers and Bobby Fulton had been phased out by former NWA booker George Scott. In other CMF news,

Kerry Von Erich has signed for additional CMF dates into June. Plus, The Midnight Express will work May 19 (Birmingham), May 20 (Dothan), May 26 (Knoxville) and May 27 (Johnson City TN).

KTVU SCHEDULES WRESTLING WITH DECIDED WWF SLANT

OAKLAND, CA - Independent KTVU has scheduled a two-hour prime time wrestling documentary May 26 which will acknowledge no organization other than the WWF.

MATWATCH has been told the program (8-10 p.m. PDT) is a news production but sources say producers are acting with total deference to WWF owner Vince McMahon.

Included will be profiles of Andre the Giant, Jake Roberts and Blue Blazer, who reportedly will be named as Owen Hart during the show.

PINFALL PROFILE

One of these days, I'm going to wake up and discover Don Owen's Portland wrestling is part of a sinister conspiracy to invade my dream world. Naaaaah, can't be. No way Owen is putting on that kind of show in that promotion that should have pronounced its benediction months ago.

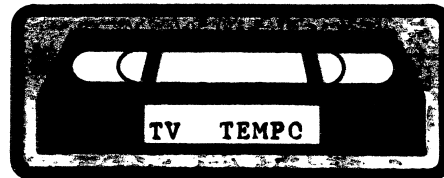
I just pinched myself. If anyone doubts a sinking promotion can experience resuscitation from creative booking, I challenge you to watch some of the last eight weeks from Portland.

Much of the fun can be credited to one Len Denton. The former Dirty White Boy turned Grappler and student of the Bill Watts School of Wrestling Television has to be making his mentor proud.

Other than Nord the Barbarian---whose reputation as being a bit of a flake scares many mainline promoters, possibly the young Southern Rockers and Scotty the Body (Levy), whom I feel is on his way to becoming a major star in the next two years, you can't find a soul which could draw serious money with a larger group. But the feuds and television are bringing back viewers in Portland because of an element a current star discussed with me a few months back: "The feuds are personal. You can do all the Russian stuff, the Iranian stuff you want but when feuds get down to a serious, bitter, one-on-one personal level, that's when people get interested."

Too bad the people who only saw Roddy Piper's WRESTLEMANIA effort haven't been able to watch his recent scenes here. His transformation of Art Barr into Beetlejuice was classic Piper and his segments are tailor-made for Piper-watchers. Call it too comic if you will, but the angle of Nord and The Grappler pouring milk and Cheerios over Brian Adams was uproarious.

The tragedy is that this show is seen on only one station in the U.S. because Owen's production costs would be too expensive for his low-budget operation to syndicate. But if you can find a trader (and I, unfortunately, can't handle any more), do so. You'll understand why I believe Portland is the reincarnation of last summer's CMF.



SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See; PILEDRIVER - Excellent; POWERSLAM - Good; DRAM - Average; RESTHOLD - Fair; BOMB - Poor; PLUS - Midscale rating.

(PMF/Most Cities) - FLA. TITLE: Al Perez d. Steve Keirn with assist from Manny Fernandez; Johnny Ace d. Gladiator; Fernandez d. Ric Diamond; Mike Graham/Italian Stallion d. Jim Backlund/El Diablo; Steelman/Southern Force d. Brett Sawyer/Lou Perez/Mike Awesome. DRAM.

(SCW) - Mr. Atlanta d. Schoolboy Crush with feet on ropes (WORST MATCH candidate); Jim Powell d. The Invader; Nightmare Ted Allen d. Tommy Rich by DQ when Mr. Atlanta runs in; Chic Donovan & David Sammartino d. Dino Minelli & Steve Lawler when David pins Dino. RECAP: Ron Starr-Steve Prichard brawl. BOMB-PLUS.

(PMTN) - WWF, Twin Towers win squash; CWA, Jeff Jarrett/Mason-Dixon Connection d. Keith Eric/Hangman/Grappler; ACW, Tommy Angel d. Spike to win ACW TV Title; MCCW, Eric Embry reinstated; NWA, Samoan Swat Team d. Midnight Express. MARS WRESTLER OF WEEK - Angel. DRAM-PLUS.

(PORTLAND) - Midnight Soldier d. Joey Jackson; Nerd the Barbarian d. Rex King; Top Gun wins countout over Al Madril when Buddy Rose throws Madril a cigarette lighter but Top Gun gets it away and shoves fire down Madril's throat; NORTHWEST TITLE: Grappler d. Carl Stiles to regain belt when, during a ref bump, Nerd gives Stiles the Brody boot; Great Scotts d. Beetlejuice/Steve Doll when Peterson uses Knucks on Doll; Rose vs. Jonathan Boyd still going as show ends. ROSE GARDEN: Rose slugs Top Gun then runs behind his valet. ANGLES: 1) Grappler/Nerd bully the radio DJ offering a reward for a Grappler pic sans mask. Rex King appears to defend the DJ but is beaten. Roddy Piper then appears and Nerd spits on him. Piper throws powder at Grappler and begins whaling away at Nerd. Piper leaves, then returns to spray Nerd/Grappler with a fire extinguisher, then beats Nerd to a juice job with the extinguisher. Piper then fends off Scotty, Jackson & Peterson; 2) Don Owen suspends Nerd indefinitely and says if he shows up next week, he'll have him thrown in jail. PILEDRIVER.

(CMF) - Ricky & Todd Morton d. Tom Prichard & Bill Tabb when Ricky pins Tom; Don (Stomper) Harris d. Brad Holliday; Wendell Cooley wins DQ over Bill Dundee when Harris runs in; Danny Davis d. Eddie Sweat; Jackie Fulton d. Bret Holliday; 2-3 FALLS: Rich Cousins & Kerry Von Erich d. Japanese Connection/Alan Martin. Fall 1: DQ when Chono throws Johnny over the top rope and posts him. He juices and can't return for 2nd fall; Fall 2: Kerry claws Martin for win. Chono & Davis try to hang Davey but Johnny saves with steel trash can. Kerry then beats all 3 with his boot and a TV BRAWL OF THE YEAR candidate erupts. Martin claims he's Kevin Dillinger after brawl. POWERSLAM-PLUS...best CMF show since Eddie Gilbert left.

(ANA) - Tony Janner d. The Nomad; Top Guns d. Tank Nelson/Tarzan; ANA TV TITLE: Greg Gagne wins DQ over Akio Sato when Sato throws salt at Greg. MAT CLASSIC: Red Bastien/Billy Robinson d. Valiant Brothers. RECAPS: Olympians-Badd Co. Tanaka & Diamond inch toward total breakup. BOMB-PLUS.

(CWA/SYND.) - See last week's CWA/WMC listing.

(MCCW) - Cactus Jack Manson d. Brickhouse Brown; UNIFIED WORLD TITLE: Belt held up. Kerry Von Erich scores pin on Jerry Lawler when heel ref Harold Harris is bumped and Bronco Lubich counts the fall. But as Bronco is bumped, Lawler slugs Kerry with a dog chain, Harris revives and counts 3 on Kerry; Matt Borne double DQ vs. Killer Brooks; 6-MAN: Jeff Jarrett/J.J. Funk/Chris Adams win DQ over Beauty & the Beast/Buddy Roberts; LOSER LEAVE MCCW: Eric Embry d. Gary Young. VIDEO: Ricky Morton. DRAM.

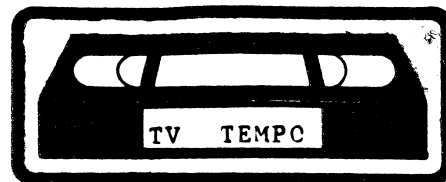
(NWA/TBS) - [MCW]: Michael Hayes d. Greg Evans; Randy Rose/Ranger Ross d. Jack Victory/Rip Morgan when Rose pins Victory but Jack & Rip hang Randy with Victory's belt; Tonga (debut) d. Trent Knight; Bob Orton d. Bob Emory; JYD d. Red Devil; SST wins countout over First Family when Kevin Sullivan drags Missy Hyatt down the aisle by her hair and Eddie Gilbert & Rick Steiner brawl outside with the Varsity Club. RECAPS: Orton-Dick Murdoch showdowns; Sting-Iron Sheik challenge; First Family-Kevin Sullivan wars. POWERSLAM. [MAIN EVENT]: SST d. Randy Rose/Ranger Ross; Tonga d. Tom Blanks; Butch Reed d. Trent Knight; From OMN1: Road Warriors-Varsity Club. DRAM-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Michael Hayes loses DQ for attacking Ranger Ross; Iron Sheik d. David Heath; Orton d. Big V; SST d. Chris Proctor/Cory Stevens; JYD d. Snake Watson; Road Warriors d. Cliff Sheets/Bob Cook; Steiner wins DQ over Danny Spivey when Sullivan runs in before Gilbert saves; Shane Douglas d. Dan Strong. PEDICINO'S NOSE: Oak Ridge Boys, Murdoch-Orton feud. ANGLE: Teddy Long feigns knee injury & leaves Orton to destroy Big V after fall before Murdoch saves but Bob & Gary Hart doubleteam Dick. DRAM.

[WORLD WIDE]: Sullivan/Spivey d. Sheets/Steve Casey in match where Casey is hurt & can't continue and Shane Douglas subs. Teddy Long counts the fall with both incorrect men in ring; Sting d. Mike Thor; Gilbert/Steiner d. Morgan/Sheik; Other winners: Road Warriors, Ross/JYD, Great Muta. RECAP: Murdoch-Orton angles. DRAM.

(WEF) - [CHALLENGE]: Warrior d. George South; Ted DiBiase d. Cougar Jay; Honky Tonk Man d. Gene Ligon; Rockers d. Chris Duffey/Mike Roy; Other winners: Brooklyn Brawler, Jim Neidhart, Sheepwackers. BOMB-PLUS.

[SUPERSTARS]: Ronnie Garvin d. Greg Valentine; Jim Duggan d. South; Rick Martel d. Terry Daniels; Rick



Rude d. Paul Smith; Other winners: John Studd, Twin Towers, Bret Hart. **BRO. LOVE:** As Brutus Beefcake calls Sherri Martel "Scary Sherri," Sherri arrives to argue and Brutus is Pearl Harbored by Randy Savage. Randy & Sherri pummel Brutus & cut his hair. Beefcake juices. **ANGLES:** Valentine demands rematch w. Garvin and says he'll retire if he loses; Jesse announces Danny Davis will return as a ref. **DRAM.** [SPOTLIGHT]: Rockers d. Barry Horowitz/Gino Carabello; Blue Blazer d. Danny Davis; Bad News Brown d. Randy Zimmerman; Other winners: Hart Foundation, Jake Roberts. **RESTHOLD.**

LINES OF THE WEEK - 1. Makhan Singh, Stampede: "Volkan and I have been a tag team longer than Joan Collins was a virgin." 2. Terry Funk, PMF: "Two things in this world are fat and ugly: Miami and Dusty Rhodes." 3. Scotty the Body & Don Koss, Portland: STB, "I've held two belts before." 4K, "The two belts you had were in a bar downtown." 4. Koss, after Piper brawl: "I wonder if that box boy job at Safeway is still open." 5. Ricky Morton, CMF: "Prichard, you're the only person I know who can whisper in his own ear." 6. Lee Marshall & Johnny Valiant, AWA: LM, "Can you believe Col. DeBeers wants to paint Derrick Dukes white?" JV, "Thank goodness we have color TV." 7. Scotty the Body, Portland, comparing Sandy Barr to Moe Howard: "Moe Barr... what about his brother, Gay Barr?" 8. Jim Ross, WCM: "This Polynesian (Tonga) doesn't work by the hour." 9. Bobby Heenan, WWF, on Rockers: "I wonder if the dancers know they're missing... 2 of the Rockettes." 10. Frank Dusek, WCCW: "We come to towns of 500, not like some of the other wrestling companies." 11. Larry Cameron & Ed Whalen, Stampede: LC, "Want to know how to surprise a fool?" EW, "Yes." LC, "I'll show you next week." 12. Mike Davis, CMF: "What kind of blow did this guy (Alan Martin) take? He says he's Kevin Dillinger." 13. Beefcake, WEF: "When I think of Sherri, it's kinda scary." 14. Jesse Ventura, WEF: "I thought Jack Tunney was trying to be a kinder, gentler president." 15. Kevin Sullivan & Bob Caudle, NWA: BC, "Why would anyone want to be that sadistic?" KS, "Because he wants to." 16. Ventura, WEF: "Lanny Poffo with a beard looks like one of my old professors from Yale." 17. Tom Prichard, CMF: "I'll say this for him (Kerry Von Erich). He has good ring music." 18. Alan Starr, SCM: "I'm new to this announcing game. I need all the help I can get."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Greg Valentine, WEF: "If I can't beat Ronnie Garvin, I'll quit wrestling forever!" 2. Michael Hayes, WCM: "I never needed Terry or Buddy. They always needed me!"

IMPERSONATION OF THE WEEK - Sting, for imitation of Iron Sheik, "Iran... I swing club."

BEST SIGN - REVOLTING RICK RUDE, WEF.

BEST PICTURES - 1. Portland, Piper brawl. 2. TBS,

Missy Hyatt slapping Paul E. Dangerously. 3. TBS, Gilbert-Sullivan brawl. 4. WEF, Beefcake-Savage angle.

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "Nerd the Barbarian," given to Nord by Don Koss. 2. "Scary Sherri," given to Martel by Beefcake. 3. "Captain Misfit," given to Percy Pringle by Skandor Akbar. 4. "The Buffet Buster," given to Frank (Tank) Nelson by Johnny Valiant. 5. "Col. Klink," given to Col. DeBeers by Derrick Dukes.

BEST INTRO - Lance Russell, for lead-in to Murdoch-Orton recap, selling so heavily, he said, "You'll see... I'm not lying to you!"

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Larry Nelson, AWA: "...only time will tell." 2. Ross, WCM: "...picture is worth 1000 words."

BLOOPER AWARD - Marty Janetty, WEF/MSG Cable, "Brainbusters, we're tired of your lying, steeting and cheating."

BOD AWARD - AWA, for Nori Helm on MAT CLASSIC. Verne, I'm all for women in wrestling but this woman has about as much connection with pro wrestling as my Aunt Lollie does with medicine.

TUBE TALK

That 6-man CMF tag wasn't the best shot match but probably the best brawl on TV this year.... Prichard-Cooley-Dundee is making an interesting triangle.... I wonder if the Portland extinguisher was the same one Roddy used in WMS. It was a much better seg.... The Piper-Nord-Grappler brawl is also a yearend poll candidate.... Adrian Street returns to CMF TV next week and is involved in an angle while plugging the rerelease of the film, GRUNT, one of the Golden Turkeys of all time.

More steady and improved NWA work this week but I wish someone would order Tommy Edwards to do digital effects OUT of pre-taped interviews and recaps to eliminate those abrupt cuts.... Joe Pedicino & Lance Russell will do the 900 phone commentary at WM'89. Bob Caudle joins Ross at the TV mike but Lance & Joe will have segs on the PPV.... Lance Russell Night in Memphis drew about 2,800 with Ken Wayne subbing for Sullivan in a loss to Eddie Gilbert. Missy's slap has Kevin grounded from flying for four weeks with a punctured eardrum. Missy went to the David Shultz school of ear slaps.

I could only sit through 20 minutes of Alan Starr & Ben Masters on SCM. It's like having an Ex-Lax milk shake.... **GOOD MOVE AWARD** to WEF: using Tony Schiavone as a Mike Adamle-type ringside reporter on SUPERSTARS. The interview with Valentine after his loss was timely.

COMINGS & GOINGS

MIDNIGHT BREAKFAST: The Midnights & Cornette will appear at two of Joel Goodheart's "BREAKFAST WITH THE WRESTLERS" in Philadelphia and Baltimore May 13 and 14. The Midnights will also work an indie show in Youngstown OH in May.

MIDNIGHT TALKS: Cornette is expected to hit Atlanta shortly to discuss his team's return to the NWA. If talks work out, the Midnights would likely be back for CLASH VII June 14, building to an eventual Cornette-Dangerously singles match.

PRICHARD STATUS: Tom Prichard now "iffy" for a move to the NWA. His start date of April 14 was postponed to April 24 in Columbus OH. Now, we're told Prichard is wavering on the money offer, which would significantly hike his pay, and the career move. One close insider said, "If Tom doesn't come this time, it won't be the NWA's fault."

NEW CWF CHAMP: Wendell Cooley beat Prichard for the CWF belt in Dothan, on the assumption Dr. Tom was leaving. Some of Prichard's NWA friends are doing some firm private counseling with the Doctor on his dalliance with the NWA offer.

TERRY & TERRY: As of Thursday, Terry Funk was still looking over his NWA contract offer but is considered in as of the May 7 PPV. Terry Gordy will probably be lurking around Nashville, too.

OWEN WATCH: The KTVU special gives you an idea of Owen's future. Jim Herd told me, "We've really worked to get Owen but we understand he's committed to stay with Vince through the rest of the year." Hart hasn't signed a WWF contract and would consider leaving but his father, Stu, is nixing it over worry Vince may retaliate by attempting to squash the Stampede territory.

WWF/OMNI: Here's the May 5 Atlanta card: Warrior-Rude for the I-C title, Demolition-Twin Towers, Bret Hart-Curt Hennig, Blazer-Valentine, Taylor-Brawler, Santana-Martel, Hillbilly-Honky & Jim Powers-Billy Wood. Boni Blackstone & John Michaels will tape PWTW segs there.

SUPER BURRHEAD: The same night, the NWA returns to Montgomery with the great Burrhead Jones reffing a JYD-Butch Reed match. Luger vs. Hayes top lines. Eddie Gilbert & Paul E. should get a big pop from their summer of '88 CWF adventures.

OTHER VOICES: Paul Carroll of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL wrote an entertaining bit in the WSJ about his crash course in Larry Sharpe's Monster Factory. After his "graduation" match, Carroll asked Sharpe, "Do I have a future in the business?" Yeah, Larry told him, "in the newspaper business."

WCW TIME: Apologies for not alerting you to the WCW time switch to 10:50 p.m. (EDT) Saturday, but TBS needed to plug it better. When the Braves are in prime time, the show will be at least one hour in a floating slot after the game. Some heat developed in TBS quarters because the NBA producers felt, we're told, plugging the CLASH VI replay after their April 13 game was "beneath them."

FRIDAY NIGHT TBS: Jim Ross will host the new magazine show starting June 23. It will feature at least two matches and a THIS WEEK IN THE NWA seg. You know my feelings about Ross but I've even told him personally of my concern that four hours a week of hosting over three days may bend to overexposure. Jim ought to be part of that show but not necessarily the lead host, in my view.

MORE FRIDAY: Don't call it FRIDAY NIGHT POWERSLAMs. A TBS exec felt that was too violent, so bet now on either NWA POWER HOUR or WRESTLING'S POWER HOUR. Once, NBC had a cartoon show, THE GODZILLA POWER HOUR. One wag even suggested Robert Schuller could host. Anyway, one weekly seg will be FUNK'S GRILL and that ought to whet your appetite.

POLLING: We had 122 phone and mail replies on the WM5 vs. CLASH question. Our results were little different from THE OBSERVER: 96% voted CLASH VI the best, 3% WM5 and 1% called it a standoff.

On an unsolicited topic, 47 callers between April 15 & 17 unanimously voted the Apr. 15 WCW the best TBS show in years, one calling it "the best show on TBS since the Gordon Solie-Roddy Piper years."

MILLER MANIA: THE ADVERTISING MANAGER reports Miller Brewing Co. may sponsor a series of Miller Mania WWF cards this summer. A Miller commercial with WWF competitors would tie in.

NETWORKING: Dusty's PWF lineup now stands at 12 stations but three are low-power, including the just added Channel 69 in Perry, FL.

MOTOR CITY: Dan Curtis will hold a one-night Michigan tag team title tourney in an unnamed Detroit suburb in early summer. Twelve teams will vie, including top-seeded Afa & Sika and #2 Motor City Hitmen.

TAKING A FALL: Cactus Jack Manson took an estimated 30-foot fall from a scaffold in a WCCW match where he and Skandor Akbar lost to Percy Pringle & Eric Embry. Manson suffered a nasty sprain.

CAGE CAPERS: Embry & Akbar met in a weird cage match last Friday at the Sportatorium. The loser-leave-WCCW bout ended in no decision when Pringle & Kimala emerged from under the ring for a melee.

FLORIDA CALLING: Congrats to Ron Lemieux (he of ARENA REPORT) and his wife on their pending move to Orlando. You'll love it, Ron...and I'll be charitable enough not to put you on the All-Cliche Team for "pot calling the kettle black." Only time will tell.

TIME MARKER: In case you were curious, ESPN's daily LEGENDS OF WORLD CLASS strip reached the point last week where Gino Hernandez had passed away and Chris Adams was "returning home to England" to re-evaluate his life.

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS: Our next MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK and YOU SAID IT! readers' comments will appear in the May 8 WRESTLE WAR edition. Try to have your letters to me by May 3 or 4, if possible. I already have a nice batch.

PWTW ON FNN/SCORE: The tentative schedule for the entire month of May is for PWTW to air, I believe, at 11:00 p.m. on Saturdays but check your weekly cable listings. That is EDT.

CABLE SOUTH: Ted Turner is getting involved in yet another cable venture: a Southeast regional cable channel, in partnership with Tele-Communications, Inc., and another partner. It is scheduled to launch Jan. 1 and will feature a lot of Southeastern Conference sports, perhaps Charlotte Hornets NBA basketball....and I just imagine a tad of NWA.

MIZLOU MOVES: Several months back, we reported on Mizlou (the minor bowl syndicator) plans to start an all-sports cable channel. ELECTRONIC MEDIA is reporting \$18 million has been raised as seed money for the venture and Mizlou officials have indicated an interest in wrestling on the new network. Trouble is, gang, there ain't that many shows left.



IF PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY GAVE THIS MAN A REMOTE CONTROL FOR HIS TV, WOULD IT BE "THE DAPPER YAPPER'S ZAPPER???"

COMINGS & GOINGS

CHANNEL HOPPING: WDSI in Chattanooga has broken up its three-hour wrestling block, retaining SCW and its stellar announcing team, and dropping NWA WORLD WIDE and DEEP SOUTH reruns.

LATE SHOPPING: I failed to plug Adam Horowitz's bulletin, BETWEEN THE ROPES, in the Shoppers Network last week. It's \$1.00 per month from Adam at 336 Harbor Dr., Long Beach NY 11561. Unfortunately, Chris Siggia has had to fold his MAT WEEKLY but don't fret for him. He's been named manager of a video store in the Erie PA area and we're proud for him.

PEANUT JONES: Finally, Rhubarb Jones' first effort as NWA Omni ring announcer almost proved disastrous. As Bobby Eaton was being hoisted onto a stretcher, Jones was given a cue and began to plug concessions, with a heavy lean on the peanuts. Cornette went over and gave him a serious admonishing which was heard on the house mike and popped the crowd. Undaunted, as Eaton was being rolled out of the ring, Rhubarb gave one last plug for the peanuts.

I REMEMBER:

Alberto Torres vs. Nick Bockwinkel III

With two weeks to cool down from a near-riot over Alberto Torres' countout loss to Nick Bockwinkel in a "no disqualification" Georgia title match, promoter Aaron Newman scheduled the rubber bout between the two in the Waycross, Ga., Auditorium.

Newman hired extra security after the previous post-show brouhaha forced deputies to escort the promoter to the dressing room and Police Capt. Gene Hatfield was stationed on the aisle near local instigator Kirk Freeman, who started the chaos after the Torres loss.

Plus, Newman added three conditions to the card: no disqualification, no countout and a special referee: Atlanta wrestling TV host Ed Capral, whose image as a wrestling news anchor made him an impeccable source for fair play. Capral's only job: count the falls and hear the submissions.

After splitting the first two falls, the final 12 minutes spilled into the crowd. Capral basically stayed in the ring and watched. At one point, Torres ---the overwhelming favorite---was hurled against a steel trash barrel and sold it perfectly until he rallied to smash a double wooden chair against Bockwinkel's knee.

At the 40-minute mark, the action rolled back into the ring for a flurry of high spots before Torres clamped his patented abdominal stretch. School custodian James Pittman, always the first ringsider in the building each week, went to his grave swearing that Bockwinkel conceded. He even suggested strongly that Capral was "deef," or paid by Bockwinkel not to acknowledge the concession (something I'm sure Ed would get a charge from today). As Bockwinkel was waving his hands, giving the impression of giving up, he pivoted and hurled Torres face first into the turnbuckle, caught Alberto in a high vertical suplex and Capral counted the fatal fall.

Classy as he was, Bockwinkel ignited pure venom from the crowd with his upper-crust, arrogant persona. Enough so that a handful of fans, including Pittman, argued with Capral all the way to the showers.

But my most vivid memory of that 1969 evening was when local athlete and Navy vet Donald Altman Jr. extended his hand to Bockwinkel and congratulated him on the win. Bockwinkel warmly returned the greeting and exchanged a polite, "Thank you." It registered with me that even a heel enjoys an occasional compliment.

RATINGS RAP: CABLE

(Week Ending April 17)	Rtg	Shr	Tot. Homes
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 4/16)	3.0	9.3	1.4 million
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 4/17)	3.0	4.6	1.395 mil.
NWA MAIN EVENT PM (TBS 4/15)	2.3	4.3	1.11 mil.
NWA WORLD CHAMPION. (TBS 4/15)	2.0	4.3	966,000
NWA CLASH VI REPLAY (TBS 4/13)	1.5	3.6	741,000
NWA MAIN EVENT AM (TBS 4/15)	0.7	5.1	340,000

(ANALYSIS: Overall, everything is down in total ratings but All-American continues to command a marvelous 9-plus share in its noon Sunday slot. TBS has to be puzzled at the weak numbers in the 7-9 Saturday block. With one of its finest shows in five years, WCW pulled only a 2.0 and dropped below a million homes for the second time in three weeks. Part, but certainly not all, of the reason is the horrible lead-in of U.S. OLYMPIC GOLD (last week, an 0.8/1.9, which means WCW increased its lead-in 150%). The view from here is that TBS, which is committed for at least two years to GOLD, badly needs to move it because, coming on the heels of network Saturday sports anthologies, cable viewers aren't hungry for another hour.)

RATINGS RAP: SYNDICATION

(Week Ending April 2)	Rating	Stations	Pct. U.S.
WWF	9.2	245	97%
NWA	7.5	143	90%

(ANALYSIS: The NWA jump of nearly two points is attributable to the ratings for CLASH VI, which are figured into TBS' advertising package. WWF stayed flat at 9.2, mostly because its Saturday stations had to buck the NCAA basketball semifinals.)

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